

We claim:-

1. A process for the purification of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid by crystallization to obtain crystals and a mother liquor, wherein the crystals are washed with a wash liquid containing acrylic acid or methacrylic acid and having a temperature of from 15 to 40°C.
2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a wash liquid which has a higher purity than the mother liquor with respect to acrylic acid or methacrylic acid is used.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein a wash liquid comprising from 97.0 to 99.9% by weight, based on 100% by weight of wash liquid, of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid is used.
4. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the crystallization is carried out as a suspension crystallization.
5. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein a wash liquid having a temperature of from 20 to 35°C is used.
6. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein a wash liquid having a temperature of from 20 to 25°C is used.
7. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein washing is effected with an amount of from 3 to 80 g of wash liquid/100 g of crystals.
8. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the wash liquid used is a pure product comprising from 99.3 to 99.8% by weight of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid.
9. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the washing is carried out in a plurality of stages.
10. A process for the preparation of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid by
 - (a) preparation of a gaseous product mixture which essentially has the

composition of a reaction mixture of the catalytic gas-phase oxidation of C3- or C4-alkanes, C3- or C4-alkenes, C3- or C4-alkanols and/or C3- or C4-alkanals and/or precursors thereof to acrylic acid or methacrylic acid,

- (b) condensation of the gaseous product mixture,
- (c) crystallization of the acrylic acid or methacrylic acid from the solution obtained in stage (b) and
- (d) purification of the acrylic acid or methacrylic acid from the crystals of the preceding stage by a process as defined in any of the preceding claims.